2: Sanders E-5 (no date) 1949 EEl Bulgaria EEl

closely packed in the church as the wedding party entered to face the altar before a table in the center of the church. 585

The bride and groom had no more than taken their stand when a middle-aged woman hurried to place dough baked in the form of a male phallic symbol deep in the sash worn by the bride and another piece to represent the female organs around the waist of the groom. This was done half surreptitiously while the priest was busy about something else. [831]

As the ceremony began I realized as never before the important part played by godparents in the ritualistic and spiritual life of the village. They stood behind the bride and groom, who were attended by the groom's brother as *dever,* or best man. The young couple shifted from foot to foot, each holding a bunch of flowers in one hand and a large burning taper in the other. The priest read from the Bible in his beautiful rich tones about the wedding at Cana of Galilee, and then asked God's blessing upon the couple. [608]

At this point the priest stepped out of his role and said to me: "Would you like to take a picture now?" Then when I was set for a time-exposure, he said to the crowd: "Everybody, quiet!" My act done, he told the godparents to assist in the changing of the rings from bride to groom, as well as the fragile, bright crowns previously placed upon the heads of the couple. In addition, the priest, as part of the ritual, passed around the chalice so the young couple, the best man, and the godparents could sip the wine. These same people then followed the priest in a walk around the table on which a cross and the Holy Scriptures rested. Three times around they went, stopping four times during each circuit to symbolize north, east, south, and west. At each of these twelve stops the party bowed over the table and its sacred relics. It was during this walk that the godmother tossed the rice, candy, and coins in the air for the children.

Such a brief account fails to include much of the liturgy which was an important part of the Orthodox Church's ceremony, but the peasant accounts of a wedding skimmed over this as being either unimportant or else a topic about which they were uninformed. In fact, most of the men accompanying the bridal party to the church remained outside during the ceremony. The parents of the groom